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VI. Events after the martyrdom: missionary transformation of an apocalyptic metaphor in *Martyrium Pauli*

JÁNOS BOLYKI

Among the many articles Willy Rordorf has written on the *Acta Pauli* (*AP*), there is one which analyses *AP* from a historical point of view. His detailed analysis of the section of *AP* that is called *Martyrium Pauli* (*MP*) is of special interest in this chapter.¹ Rordorf examines whether we can find data that are relevant in the context of the Neronian persecution of Christians.² He holds that we can find such data, because: 1) *MP* clearly shows a political enmity between the Roman Empire and a Christianity that has just begun;³ 2) this enmity is expressed in *MP* through the language of an apocalyptic Jewish-Christian confession that foretells a death of fire for those who do not worship the eternal emperor;⁴ 3) the

1 For the text of the *Martyrion tou hagiou apostolou Paulou* see R.A. Lipsius (ed), *Acta Petri, Acta Pauli, Acta Petri et Pauli, Acta Pauli et Theclae, Acta Thaddei* (Leipzig, 1891) 105-17, tr. *NTA* II, 260-3. Note also the first, very small fragment of *MP* on papyrus: A. López García, 'PLit.Palau Rib 18: Martyrium Pauli, I 18-22', *ZPE* 110 (1996) 132.

2 W. Rordorf, 'Die neronische Christenverfolgung im Spiegel der Apokryphen Paulusakten', *New Test. Stud.* 28 (1981-82) 365-74, repr. in his *Lex orandi. Lex credendi* (Fribourg, 1993) 368-77.

3 Rordorf, 367: later reports of martyrdom no longer represent a political eschatology. On the other hand, H.W. Tajra, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul: Historical and Judicial Context, Traditions and Legends* (Tübingen, 1994) 120-1, rightly observes that Paul is a loyal Roman citizen in Acts, whereas in *MP* he stands up against the Roman Empire and its emperor, Nero.

4 *MP* 4.10: '...change your mind and be saved from the fire that is coming upon the whole world'; 2.5: 'Christ Jesus, the king of the ages'.

burning of Rome in A.D. 64 and the persecuting of Christians is thus not only attested by **Tacitus** - and the Christian sources of 1 Clement 5-6 and the *Ascension of Isaiah* 4 - but also by *AP*. Consequently, Rordorf uses *AP* as an indirect argument in illuminating the historical circumstances of the Neronian persecution.'

The present paper examines *MP* - and especially its epilogue - not so much from a historical perspective, but rather from a literary viewpoint. Our aim is to understand the literary goal of the author and to find the theological view that stands behind the work and its author - a view shared by the Christian community represented by them. The thesis of this chapter is that the literary tendency and the theological view of the work run parallel to the historical affirmations of Rordorf, but at the same time they can be viewed as a missionary transformation of the apocalyptic metaphor that is stressed by him.

I shall attempt to support the above thesis in the following ways: 1) I shall analyse the structure and motifs of the epilogue of *MP*, i.e. those of the events after the martyrdom; 2) I shall compare this work with other novels of the same genre; 3) I shall examine the persons - characters - of the writing; 4) I shall give a short exposition of the text; 5) I shall make an attempt to understand the literary and theological tendency of the author.

Epilogue

Because of practical reasons I limit my examination to the events after the martyrdom. These I call the Epilogue. An analysis of the whole martyr story would be too long. In order to better understand the Epilogue, however, I shall give a short overview of the whole martyr story.

- 1) Paul arrives in Rome. He hires a barn where he teaches. Patroclus, Caesar's young cup-bearer, falls from a high window. The apostle Paul brings him back from death.

- II) **Patroclus** bears witness to Christ in front of Nero. Caesar issues a decree against the 'Christians and the soldiers of Christ' (MP 2.5).
- III) Paul is among the many Christian prisoners. In a sermon he stands up against Caesar. Nero commands all the prisoners to be burned with fire and Paul to be beheaded.
- IV) Paul - convicted to be executed - promises that after his martyrdom he shall appear to Caesar. The prefect **Longus** and the centurion **Cestus** are impressed by Paul's preaching.
- Va) **Longus** and **Cestus** want to become Christians. Paul tells them to appear at his tomb after his execution. Then they can be baptized.
- Vb) Paul's execution is followed by the epilogue (which is to be given here in more detail).

We may summarise the Epilogue as follows:⁶

- 1) *The effect of the martyrdom upon those present* (5, lines 16-21). From the beheaded body of Paul milk spurts upon the soldier's clothing. The soldier and those who stood by are amazed, and they glorify God who had given Paul such glory. They go to report to Caesar what had happened.
- 2) *The martyr appears to his enemies* (6). Caesar contemplates the events in the company of many philosophers and the centurion. Around 3 p.m. Paul, who is dead, appears. He introduces himself as God's soldier. He says that he is alive in (or to) God. He proclaims the punishment of God upon Caesar, because he unjustly shed the blood of the righteous. Then Paul departs. Caesar - greatly troubled - commands the prisoners to be set free.
- 3) *The baptism of the prefect Longus and of the centurion Cestus at the tomb of Paul. The martyr appears to his disciples* (7). As Paul directed, at dawn **Longus** and **Cestus** go to the tomb of Paul. There they can see two men praying (Titus and Luke), and Paul himself between them. **Longus** and **Cestus** are astounded. Titus and Luke are seized with fear and flee. The two catechumens run after them and explain that they are not pursuing them, but expect God's seal from them, as Paul had promised. Titus and Luke give **Longus** and **Cestus**

6 The text of the report which we call Epilogue, which describes the events after the martyrdom, can be found in Lipsius, 115-7, from point V, line 16 to point VII, line 8, tr. *NTA* II, 262-3.

the seal, i.e. they baptize them. They glorify God together.

We may list the following motifs of the epilogue - motifs that occur during the events after the martyrdom -: (1) the effects of the martyrdom upon those present; (2) the appearance of the dead martyr to his enemies and (3) to his disciples. A comparison of this epilogue with other martyr stories may yield interesting results. Let us ~~turn~~ to this inquiry.

The epilogue of MP and other novels of the same genre

The epilogue of *MP* can be placed in the line that begins with the biblical martyrologies and virtually ends with the martyrdom acts that were produced in the middle of the 4th century. The Apocryphal Acts (*AAA*) - those of the second and third centuries - are in the middle of that line. A common characteristic of this whole series of works is that they all belong to the genre of martyrology. I shall focus on analysing the motifs that belong to the endings of this genre, the epilogues, i.e. the endings that contain the events after the martyrdoms, but first I shall give a list of them:

1. The effect of the death of the martyr upon the eye-witnesses
2. Miraculous transformations of the dead body of the martyr
3. The **respectful** gathering of the earthly remains of the martyr
4. The careful burial of the martyr by his disciples
5. **Appearance(s)** of the martyr before his enemies **and/or** his disciples
6. The founding of the cult of the martyr
7. Closing lines of the author in a personal voice (first person singular or plural)
8. Doxology

It is a matter of course that although the above list includes all the possible motifs, yet not every motif is there in each martyr story. The list has been put together on the basis of the following works:

- 1) *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli (MPtP)* from the 7th century, which can be viewed as a late development of the martyr

stories of the apocryphal acts.'

- 2) From the (legendary) Christian martyr acts: the Martyrdoms of Ignatius,⁸ Clement,⁹ Pionius¹⁰ and Polycarp.¹¹
- 3) From the *AAA*: the endings of the *Acts of Andrew*,¹² *Acts of Peter*¹³ and *Acts of Thomas*.¹⁴
- 4) From the New Testament: the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7.54-8.3) and the beheading of John the Baptist (Mk 6.14-29). From among the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament: the Maccabean martyr stories (1 Macc 1.41-64; 2 Macc 6.1-12.7).

Ad 1) I discuss the motifs of the epilogues of the martyr stories starting from the latest and moving back to older traditions. The youngest work is *MPtP*, which contains a cult legend that locates Peter's burial in the Vatican.¹⁵ Here we not only find that the martyrs are honoured as saints, but we also find Peter's connection to the Vatican.

Ad 2) From the Christian *acta martyrum*, the martyrdom of Ignatius (*Mart. Ign.* 6-7) occurred in the midst of beasts. The bones of the martyr who was torn apart were brought as relics to Antioch. On 13 January (in our calendar this is 10 December), on

7 Lipsius, 118-77; within this the epilogue: 171-7.

8 *Mart. Ign.* 6-7, cf. J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* II.1 (London, 1885) 363-536 (text), 571-84 (translation); F.X. Funk, *Patres Apostolici* II (Tiibingen, 1901) XLIII and 218-45 (text).

9 *Mart. Clem.* 23-4, cf. J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* I (London, 1890²), 85-91; Funk, *Patres Apostolici* II, IX and 28-45 (text).

10 *Mart. Pionii* 21-3, cf. L. Robert, *Le martyre de Pionios, prêtre de Smyrne* (Washington D.C., 1994).

11 *Mart. Polycarpi* 15-22, cf. A.A.R. Bastiaansen *et al.*, *Atti e passioni dei martiri* (Milan, 1987) 3-31, 371-83.

12 *Acta Andreae* 63-5, in D.R. MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew* (Atlanta, 1990), 434-41.

13 *Mart. Petri* 11-2, in Lipsius, 98-103.

14 *Mart. Thomae* = *Ath* 168-70, cf. *NTA* II, 372.

15 *MPtP* 63,15: *etheekan auto hypo teen terebinthon plesion tou naumaxiou eis topon kaloumenon Batikanon*. For a terebinth tree as a place of burial see also 1 Sam 31.13.

the day of the martyrdom, Ignatius appeared before his disciples - at this point the narrative turns into the first person plural - and arranged the founding of his cult.

The martyrdom of Clement (Mart. *Clem.* 23-24) narrates that the emperor **Trajan** ordered that an iron anchor should be fixed to the neck of this saint and that he should be thrown into the sea lest his relics could be honoured by his believers. In other words, the pagan emperor opposed the cult of relics. However, the prayer of the people caused the sea to be withdrawn for 3.000 miles, and there was a marble temple at the place of the martyrdom. Clement lay in the temple. From this point in time onwards the sea withdrew for seven days at every anniversary of the martyrdom so that the cult of the martyr would not be hindered.

Pionius was crucified and burned (Mart. *Pionii* 21-3). However, in a miraculous way his body remained intact. He was like an athlete in his strength, his hair and beard remained in order, and his ears did not shrunk in the fire. His shining face brought awe to the unbelievers and strength to the Christians. The epilogue fixes the date of the martyrdom for the sake of the yearly cult.

Polycarp was sentenced to be burned at the stake (Mart. *Pol.* 15-7), but the fire was not able to consume him, so he was pierced by a sword (16). His remains were gathered by his disciples. The epilogue finishes with a paraenesis in the first person plural, the naming of the writer, and the description of the transmission of the tradition.

Ad 3) Let us now turn to the epilogues of the martyr stories of the *AAA*. It is likely that *ATH* (3rd century) is the latest among them. According to the epilogue of its martyr story, the apostle Thomas - having been pierced through by four soldiers - is laid in beautiful clothing into a king's tomb. At the tomb, the apostle appears first to his followers who buried him. He sends them back to their homes, but he mentions that they shall gather again at his tomb (is this perhaps the anticipation of a cult?). Secondly, he appears to converted, noble women and he helps them keep to their abstinence **from** sexual life with their husbands. This corresponds to the gnostic-encratic spirit of *ATH*. Thirdly, Thomas appears to his enemy, the king, and he heals his son. The king

then joins the Christians.

In the martyr epilogue of *AA*, the 'we' source (first person plural) begins already at the crucifixion of **Andrew**.¹⁶ He is buried at the sea shore, not far from his former prison. Maximilla, the wife of proconsul Aegeates, leaves her husband because of the effect of Andrew's martyrdom upon her (sexual enkrateia). **Strato**cles, the brother of Aegeates refuses the inheritance of the proconsul who committed suicide (social enkrateia). The author speaks in first person singular in the closing lines. He says a prayer for the readers, and finishes his work with a doxology.

Cc.40-1 of *APt* narrate the death of Peter, and how he was taken from the cross and buried by **Marcellus**.¹⁷ Then follows an interesting scene. Peter appears in the dream of Marcellus and rebukes him for the expensive **funeral**¹⁸ - with a reference to Mt 8.22: 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead' (RSV). Then someone appears to Nero in a dream (it is not clear whether Peter himself or somebody else). As an effect of this vision, Caesar stops persecuting the Christians.

Ad 4) In the New Testament we find the martyrdom of John the Baptist (Mk 6.14-29) and that of Stephen (Acts 7.54-8.3). In the former we meet the characteristic of Jewish martyr stories, according to which martyrdom is the consequence of faithfulness to the Law (John had warned **Herod** not to live with the wife of his **brother**).¹⁹ Mk 6.29 narrates the simple burial by John's disciples - this being part of the events after the martyrdom. However, w. 14b and 16 - partly in the first person singular - refer to John's being alive in the bad conscience of **Herod** Agrippa. There

16 See MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew*, 436 n. 198 and 437 n. 146.

17 Marcellus appears in *AJ* 18, as someone whose wife belonged to the circle of John, but by that time he was no longer alive. According to *APt* he buried Peter in his own tomb (40), cf. O. Cullmann, *Petrus. Jünger. Apostel. Märtyrer* (Berlin, 1961) 176. According to *MPtP* 63 he buried Peter in the Vatican.

18 It is a beautiful apophthegm (11.8-9): *Ekeina oun ha pareschou eis ton nekron, apotelesas*.

19 J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Zürich, 1978) 246-9.

is no mentioning of an appearance of the martyr John, nor do we read about a miracle out of revenge. These motifs are not to be found in Stephen's martyr story either. Here we find the following events after the martyrdom: the dead body is cleared away, the deceased is wept over, Saul persecutes the Church. There is no mentioning of an extra burial, of appearances, of miracles of any kind. We know, however, that as an effect of Stephen's death Christian mission spread: partly because of the dispersion of the Christians, partly as a consequence of Saul's conversion.

On the basis of this overview we can make the following comparing remarks about the epilogue of *MP*:

- 1) The epilogue of *MP* lacks many of the motifs of later martyr stories: the divine transparency of the dead body; a luxury burial with balm; the strengthening of enkrateia; the beginnings of the cult of the saint; the miracles of punishment.
- 2) In the epilogue of *AP* we find two motifs that are not found elsewhere: the releasing of the Christian prisoners and the receiving of the baptism at Paul's tomb.²⁰ Both special motifs are consequences of the missionary interest of the text.
- 3) All this means that from the points of view of chronological order and of the motifs that occur in the genre of martyrdom the epilogue of *MP* is nearer to *MPtP* and to the biblical martyr stories than to the others. This supports the view of Rordorf who holds that the roots of the tradition contained in *MP* go back to the first half of the second century.²¹

The function of the characters from the point of view of understanding the text

It stands out that six auxiliary characters appear in pairs. Each pair

20 We may compare that in *MPtP* 41.12 Nero stops persecuting the Christians. However, there is no mentioning of him releasing the prisoners.

21 Rordorf, 366: 'zumindest Teile davon konnten auch schon in der 1. Hälfte dieses (= 2.) Jahrhunderts verfasst sein'.

fulfils an important role in the mission. The pairs complement one another, but they are also distinct from each other. Titus and Luke already expect Paul in the beginning of *MP* (1), since they are his co-workers of old. At the end of *MP* they baptize the first catechumens after the death of Paul - and in this way they continue the mission of the martyred apostle.²² Patroclus,²³ the young cup-bearer, and Barsabas Justus,²⁴ 'with flat feet', represent Gentile and Jewish Christianity respectively. They had converted already before the martyrdom of Paul, but Nero threw them into prison because of their faith, although they belonged to the court of Caesar. As an effect of the appearing of the martyr Paul - and as an effect of Paul's words - Nero releases them both. The text mentions that there arose a kernel of Christian congregation around the figure of Barsabas Justus.²⁵ The prefect Longus and the centurion Cestus is the next pair of characters, whom the author never lets speak separately, but always together. They represent the civil government and the army respectively. As catechumens before the martyrdom of the apostle they were touched by the preached word, but they did not receive baptism which they longed for. They receive the seal only after the death

22 R. Bauckham, 'The Acts of Paul as a sequel to Acts', in B.W. Winter and A.D. Clarke (eds), *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting: Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids, 1993) 105-52, esp. 117.

23 His role reminds one of that of young Eutychus in Acts 20.7-12, who fell out of the window, died and then was raised miraculously by Paul. He also reminds one of the cup-bearer of Pharaoh in Gen 40. However, while the cup-bearer forgets about freeing the man of God (Joseph), in *MP* the man of God (Paul) frees the cup-bearer of Caesar.

24 According to *MP* 2.14, Barsabas Justus belongs to the first men (*protoi*) of Caesar. His other name is *platypous* ('having flat feet'). Bauckham (*op.cit.* 110-1) holds that it seems rather doubtful that this Barsabas would be the same as the apostle designate in Acts 1.23. Eus. HE. 3.39.9 notes about him - following a tradition from Papias - that although he drank deadly poison, out of the grace of God he suffered no illness.

25 Nero commands the prisoners and Patroclus to be released, and also Barsabas and his group.

of the apostle - among miraculous (and partly humorous) circumstances.

There is one important auxiliary character who is not named in the story: the soldier.²⁶ It is not his name that is important, but his life-style. The term 'soldier' and cognate words occur 14 times in *MP*. Terms as 'king', 'great king', 'eternal king' occur 12 times. This is no accident. These are references to the army-related metaphor system of the writing which we have already mentioned. The philosophers and the centurion who gather around the emperor represent wisdom and power **respectively**.²⁷

The two main characters are the two lonely ones who oppose one another: Caesar Nero and the apostle Paul. At first sight they seem to be representatives of two opposing realities: the Roman Empire and the Church. In my view, we can see something more here: the opposition between the transitional-human and the eternal-divine powers.²⁸

A short exposition of the epilogue of MP

Having discussed the specific elements of the text and the function of the characters, I shall focus here upon those ideas that have not been emphasized yet.

5.16-18a: When the executioner beheads Paul,²⁹ milk spurts upon the soldier's clothing from the body of the apostle. Milk here

26 He reports the events to Caesar (MP 5.17-8). It is significant that also Paul calls himself the soldier of God when - as a dead martyr - he appears to Caesar.

27 The text does not tell us whether or not this centurion is **Cestus** himself, or another person. As he usually appears together with **Longus** - and since the name usually precedes the rank -, it does not seem likely that the two centurions were one and the same person.

28 The eschatological metaphor reaches its climax here. As we shall see, **from** now on it will be transformed in the direction of the mission.

29 We do not find the usual term *apokefalizoo* here, as in the case of John the Baptist (Mk 6.27), but the euphemism of *apotinassoo*, which means to shake off (in Lk 9.5 the dust; in Acts 28.3-5 the viper).

is mentioned with a symbolic meaning.³⁰ Its opposite is solid food. Both refer to the apostolic teaching: milk signifies the basic elements of the Christian message; solid food nourishes those who are advanced in faith.³¹ We may recall that in Jn 19.34 blood and water poured out of the body of Jesus. This has a sacramental significance in the Fourth Gospel, but hardly in *MP*. Here we can rather think of the missionary preaching (the kerygma) as nourishment for beginners.

5.18b-21: The ordinary soldiers have the role of witnesses at the death of Paul, just as the centurion was the witness at the death of Jesus (Mk 15.39). The centurion and the bystanders (Mk 15.35,39; Jn 19.26) think of the events as a miracle. They praise God who gave Paul such glory. There is no trace of the worship of saints. Rather we can see the idea of *Soli Deo Gloria*; and only within this there is a mentioning of the glory given to Paul. Phrases in this scene - that relate to reflecting on the miracle, for example, when they saw it, the soldier and all who stood by were amazed, and glorified God who had given Paul such glory - remind one of the motifs of the closing chorus in the miracle stories.³²

30 It would be interesting - but in our view a mistaken interpretation - to refer to Isa 9.4: instead of a garment rolled in blood the soldier has milk on his coat.

31 In 1 Cor 3.2 Paul writes: 'I fed you with milk, not solid food'. In the context, the nourishment for beginners is the kerygma; more advanced Christians have wisdom (*sophia*) or knowledge (*gnosis*) as solid food (*brooma*). Heb 5.12-3 presents the teaching of the elements (*stoicheia*) as parallel with being nourished by milk - which is the characteristic of someone who is a minor. 1 Pet 2.2 uses the language of mystery religions when he speaks of the pure spiritual milk, cf. Schlier, 'gala', *TWNT* I. 644-5. In A J 45 the apostle John tells the Ephesians that he would not leave them until they have stopped being fed on milk and stand on solid rock; note also Odes of Solomon 8.16. Tajra, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul*, 130 affirms that milk is a sign of immortality.

32 Cf. G. Theissen, *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten* (Gütersloh, 1987⁵) 11ff, who differentiates between simple statement, demonstration and admiration. All of these occur also in our story. The verbs *thaumazoo*

6.1-8: The place of this scene is the court of Nero. Receiving the news about Paul's death, the court is troubled and uncertain. The term used here (*diaporeoo*) occurs in the New Testament in relation to **Herod** who is perplexed after the execution of John the Baptist. It also expresses the trouble of the overseers in the temple when they find out that the apostles had disappeared from prison (Lk 9.7; Acts 5.24). The word indicates the troubled mind of those in power when they perceive that those who were convicted by them are no longer under their authority. The martyr Paul comes (not: appears) to the court of Caesar at nine o'clock (3 p.m. in our counting).³³ He says: 'Caesar, here I am - Paul, God's soldier'. I am not dead, but alive in my God.

What the apostle - already before his execution (4.3-5) - promised toward Caesar, has been fulfilled: Caesar, it is not for a short time that I live for my king.³⁴ And if thou behead me, this will I do: I will arise and appear to thee (in proof) that I am not dead, but alive to my Lord Christ Jesus. The thought reminds one of Ps 118.17 (LXX 117.17): 'I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord'.

6.9-12: Paul predicts a divine punishment for Caesar.³⁵ He calls the emperor an unhappy man (*athlios*). This is again a picture taken **from** the life of the soldier. Nero is the struggling soldier who is defeated; Paul is the victorious one. The sin of Caesar is that he unjustly shed the blood of the righteous.³⁶ The punishment will occur not many days hence (cf. Acts 1.5). Nero, greatly troubled, releases the Christian prisoners who had been imprisoned

and *doksazoo* are also important (cf. Mk 2.12, 5.20; Lk 5.26).

33 It would be interesting to know whether the ninth hour (3 p.m.) has a symbolic meaning, but we do not want to speculate in this respect.

34 Also here we can note the opposition between transitory human power and the eternal divine power that overcomes even death.

35 In the New Testament *kolasis* refers to bad conscience (1 Jn 4.14) and to the punishment of damnation (Mt 25.46).

36 The opposition between the noun and the adverb - both coming **from** the same **dik-stem* - may be regarded as a play on words: *dikaioon haima adikoos eksecheas*, cf. Mt 27.4, 24.

according to 2.20.³⁷ The consequence of Paul's appearance, then, is amnesty.

7.1-14: At dawn, **Longus** and **Cestus** go to Paul's tomb - as the apostle had directed them.³⁸ Up to this point there was no mentioning of Paul's burial - unlike in the case of the other martyr acts and *AAA*. Arriving at the tomb, **Longus** and **Cestus** can see two men praying, and the dead Paul between them. **Longus** and **Cestus** were astounded because of the miracle that contradicts human experience (*to paradokson thauma*).³⁹ Titus and Luke, the men praying, were seized with human fear,⁴⁰ because they knew that **Longus** and **Cestus** belonged to Caesar's court. Here follows an ironic-humorous scene: Titus and Luke flee from the men of the emperor. The latter run **after** them, because they long for the seal in the Lord, i.e. baptism.⁴¹ Having clarified the **circumstances**, **Longus** and **Cestus** are baptized. Catechumens and **catechetes** start to praise God.⁴² The author joins in the doxology - in first person singular - as is expected from a Christian writer who follows the customs of the closing of this genre.

37 Cf. Acts 4.21. For those listed by names see note 25.

38 His tomb is a taphos, and not one carved in a rock, mneemeion.

39 *Ekpleessoo* ('to be out of oneself'); in the New Testament the word usually refers to the effect of Jesus' teaching or to that of his miracles, e.g. Mt 7.28; Mk 7.37.

40 The expression contains an element of rebuking: having been Christians for a long time, Titus and Luke should not have been overcome by human fear.

41 AP uses the original term for baptism (to baptisimos) only in relation to the lion (in the scene in Ephesus). Otherwise AP always refers to the baptism as a seal (sphragis). Thecla administers this seal to herself (*AThe* 34). In Myra, Hermocrates receives the seal of the Lord as baptism (AP, *PHeid* p.28). The term is first used with the meaning of baptism in *Hermas'* *Shepherd* (VIII.2.3ff, IX.16.3-7 and 14.4), cf. G. Fitzer, 'sphragis', *TWNT* VII, 939-54, esp. 952-3.

42 Previously, in MP 2.7, Patroclus calls God the King of the Aeons, cf. 1 Tim 1.17.

Literary tendency and theological view in the epilogue of MP

We recall Rordorf's affirmation that in *MP* we find enmity between the Roman Empire and the early Church. The language is that of Jewish-Christian apocalyptic. All this fits into the historical data that we know from Tacitus and other sources about the Neronian persecution of the Christians. We have verified his thesis from a literary viewpoint and with the methods of literary criticism. We have also evaluated the text from a theological viewpoint. We have added to Rordorf's thesis that the political-eschatological metaphors in the epilogue of *MP* have been transformed into categories that express the victory of the mission. We can now summarise our conclusions in four points:

1. The political enmity between Christianity and the Roman Empire in *MP* points to the biblical eschatological conviction according to which all political power is transitory and is judged and replaced by the eternal power of God.⁴³
2. We find in *MP* - in addition to the Jewish and Jewish-Christian apocalyptic language - a system of Roman military metaphors that is known also from the canonical Pastoral Epistles.⁴⁴

43 Cf. the opposition between Jesus and Pilate in Jn 18.36; between the three young men and the Babylonian king in Dan 3.17; between Yahweh and the idols in Ps 97.7b. Tajra, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul*, 120-1 describes the changes in the picture of Paul in the Christian tradition. In the canonical Acts of Luke Paul is a loyal subject, although he repeatedly has to defend himself in front of local authorities because of charges brought against him. In the Pastoral Epistles we meet an old man waiting patiently for his death. Finally, *AP* (or rather, *MP*) portrays a dynamic apostle who is prepared for martyrdom when he stands up against Nero and the Roman Empire.

44 1 Tim 1.18, 6.12; 2 Tim 2.3-4. Here Paul calls Timothy a good soldier of Christ, who fights the good fight of the faith. J. Jeremias, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (Gottingen, 1963) 15, affirms: 'Es entspricht dem mannlichen Christentum des Paulus, dass er das Bild vom Kriegsdienst liebt, wenn er vor allem als Amtsträger (vgl. 2 Tim 2.3-4; 1 Cor 9.7) als Kriegsmann Jesu Christi bezeichnet, der gleicherweise zum

3. In this system of metaphors the apostle Paul calls himself the soldier of Christ (*MP* 7.6). Thus his martyrdom is a hero's death.⁴⁵
4. *However, the tendency of MP is primarily not an eschatological but a missionary one.* The use of the military metaphor suggests that the conversion of the characters is like the desertion from **an** earthly **ruler** into the army of the eternal king.⁴⁶ The apostle's death is not only a hero's death, but a death that brings about victory. His appearing after his martyrdom expresses that from that point on he fights from **an** eternal dimension - with the weaponry of immortality - for the victory of the Christian mission.⁴⁷

Kampf wie **zum** Leben **gerüstet** sein muss'. As is well known, the metaphor of the spiritual weaponry in Eph 6.10-7 describes the **armour** of a Roman legionary.

45 2 Tim 4.6-8 first uses pictures taken from sport-life, but it turns to the language of the gladiators. The reference to the execution by the sword (the execution of Roman citizens) is taken with a cultic meaning by the author and applied to the sacrifice.

46 In *MP* 3.4-5 Nero brings the charge against Paul that he comes secretly into the Roman Empire and recruits soldiers for himself **from** among the subjects of Caesar. Paul answers in his missionary zeal: Caesar, not only from thy province (eparchia) do we enlist soldiers, but from the whole world (*oikumenee*), i.e. also from outside the Roman Empire. Paul even calls upon Nero to serve the King of Paul.

47 Whereas in *AJ* the goal of the mission is to Christianize only one city, Ephesus, in *AP* - and what is our concern here: in *MP* - we find a missionary strategy that overarches the Roman Empire and even the whole of humanity.